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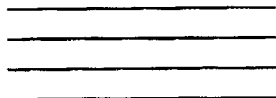
Director of Central Intelligence



National Intelligence Daily

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: FEB 2004

Friday, 1 August 1997



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VID 97
1 August 1997

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AMERICAS

Ecuador:

Still Weighing Fighter Purchase

Ecuadorian officials recently expressed frustration about President Alarcon's indecisiveness in buying Russian MiG-29 fighter aircraft, [redacted] They said a decision needs to be made soon to enable strategic planning.

[redacted]

[redacted] Alarcon, whose approval is required, is concerned about the effects a purchase would have on the fragile Ecuadorian economy [redacted]

[redacted] the military is [redacted] views the MiG-29 as the best available option to counter Peru's new fighters, *and Alarcon appears persuaded that Ecuador needs to counter Lima's air superiority. Alarcon may be holding out to see if Russia comes back with a better deal or if Ecuador is presented with cheaper alternatives.*

[redacted]

[redacted]

Peruvian President Fujimori publicly has acknowledged the MiG-29 acquisition and praised the Air Force and its new aircraft, but he did not divulge how many MiG-29s Peru had received or say anything about more arms purchases. According to press reports, [redacted]

[redacted] Peru has 24 MiG-29s, [redacted]

[redacted]

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